



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH



NEWS RELEASE

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Additional Student in Grand Forks Elementary School Diagnosed With Active Tuberculosis *Two additional cases confirmed as part of the outbreak*

BISMARCK, N.D. – Health officials are reporting that a second student at Phoenix Elementary School in Grand Forks has been diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB), and another additional child in that household has also been diagnosed as a case. Health officials say this new case is a child in the same household as the first case announced on Friday and the child did not contact TB while attending school. Health officials are also reporting that another child in this household has been diagnosed with active TB. This child does not attend school. This brings the total number of active cases identified as part of this outbreak since October to 10.

Parents of children in this additional classroom are being contacted today with information about testing. The first confirmed case in the school was announced during a news conference held in Grand Forks on Friday. Classmates of the first confirmed case in the school are being tested today (Nov. 13), and classmates of the second confirmed case will have the opportunity to be tested on Wednesday, Nov. 14.

Tuberculosis is a disease that is spread from person to person through the air when someone with TB disease has coughed or sneezed into the air, usually in an indoor environment. Exposure to tuberculosis includes frequent or prolonged exposure, such as sitting in a small room or confined area for a long period of time with someone who has active TB and is infectious. Not all active TB cases are infectious. This means that students in the same classrooms as the sick children will be recommended for testing, but others in the school may not. If parents have not received information regarding testing, then testing is not being recommended for their child based on the amount of exposure that child has had to the cases.

Health officials continue to do contact investigations to identify people who may have been exposed to the active cases that may be infectious. Those who are considered at risk will be contacted and given guidance about testing procedures. When TB cases such as this are occurring in a community, it takes

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a significant amount of time to conduct the investigations around each case and complete the testing and treatment needed. It is expected that more cases will be identified.

Testing and investigations have shown that these cases identified since October are connected to previously confirmed cases in the area. Here is a breakdown of age and gender associated with the cases:

Age	Cases		
Younger than 10	4		
10-19 years			
20-29 years	3	Gender	
30-39 years		Female	3
40-49 years	3	Male	7
50- 59 years			
60 and older			
Total Cases	10		10

Anyone can get TB. Individuals with weakened immune systems, including those with AIDS or those infected with HIV, are at increased risk. In the United States, the most common risk factors for TB are social factors, such as substance abuse, being incarcerated in a correctional facility, minority populations, being born in a country where TB is more common and homelessness.

The general symptoms of TB disease include feeling sick or weak, weight loss, fever and night sweats. The symptoms of TB of the lungs include productive, prolonged cough (duration of three weeks or longer), chest pain, and coughing up blood. It should be noted that symptoms usually develop gradually and last for a prolonged period of time. This is different than symptoms of the flu, which usually come on very suddenly and go away after a couple of days to a week. Anyone experiencing symptoms of TB should contact his or her health-care provider as soon as possible for an evaluation.

The most important way to stop the spread of tuberculosis is to cover the mouth and nose when coughing, and for those with TB to take the prescribed medication as directed. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

For more information, contact Dee Pritschet, North Dakota Department of Health, at 701.328.2377 or Grand Forks Public Health, at 701.787.8100. Information about TB can be found by visiting www.ndhealth.gov/disease/tb/ or www.cdc.gov/tb/.

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